

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----030824 231837Z /42

O R 231609Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3774  
INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE  
USMISSION USUN  
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 20055

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: CF, XA, XJ, FR  
SUBJ: US AFRICAN POLICY: SHABA, SOVIET CUBAN INVOLVEMENT

REFS: A. STATE 153145. B. DAKAR 4616. C. LIBREVILLE 1669

BEGIN SUMMARY: WE AND THE FRENCH ARE AGREED ON THE  
NEED FOR AFRICANS TO SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS WITHOUT  
OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. IN PUBLIC COMMENTS AND IN DIS-  
CUSSIONS WITH AFRICAN LEADERS WE SHOULD NOT APPEAR TO  
EQUATE RECENT FRENCH MILITARY INTERVENTION WITH THAT  
OF SOVIETS AND CUBANS; FRENCH INTERVENTION DIFFERS  
IN NATURE AND SCOPE AND IS RESPONSIVE TO BROAD-BASED  
(THOUGH HARDLY UNIVERSAL) AFRICAN DESIRES. FRENCH  
HAVE INTERVENED MILITARILY WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE

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BUT WOULD NOT AGREE TO EXCLUDE IT AS A FUTURE OPTION  
SIMPLY ON THE BASIS OF A SOVIET PLEDGE NOT TO INTERVENE  
SINCE AFRICAN STATES FEARFUL OF SOVIET INTENTIONS  
WHICH LOOK TO FRANCE AND WEST FOR SUPPORT WOULD FEEL  
ABANDONED. PRESENT FRENCH PUSHING OF PAN-AFRICAN  
FORCE IS LARGELY FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL "DETERRENT" REASONS  
BUT OVER LONGER TERM FRENCH BELIEVE WEST MUST MATER-

ALLY HELP AFRICAN STATES TO DEFEND THEMSELVES. THEY SEE ALTERNATIVE AS BEING CONFRONTED WITH FUTURE SITUATIONS WHERE WE WILL HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN INTERVENING DIRECTLY OR LEAVING THE FIELD TO THE SOVIETS AND THEIR SURROGATES. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO COORDINATE AND COOPERATE WITH THE FRENCH ON THE BASIS OF OUR COMMON OBJECTIVES AND AVOID LETTING TACTICAL DIFFERENCES DIVIDE US. END SUMMARY.

1. IN DECIDING HOW BEST TO HELP THE AFRICANS HELP THEMSELVES (REF A) IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE FRENCH PERSPECTIVE (WHICH HAS BEEN BADLY MISUNDERSTOOD OR SIMPLIFIED TO THE POINT OF CARICATURE IN SOME US PRESS COMMENTARY) BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. FRANCE IS AN IMPORTANT ALLY WITH MAJOR INTERESTS AND CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE IN MUCH OF AFRICA. MOREOVER, THE FRENCH MAINTAIN--WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION WE BELIEVE--THAT THEIR RECENT ACTIVIST POLICIES IN AFRICA HAVE FAVORED NOT ONLY FRENCH BUT ALSO BROADER WESTERN INTERESTS AND BOLSTERED MODERATE AFRICAN FRIENDS OF THE WEST DIRECTLY THREATENED OR FEARFUL OF OUTSIDE AGGRESSION.

2. A US POSITION OPPOSING ALL OUTSIDE INTERVENTION IN AFRICA WOULD RISK OFFENDING THE FRENCH WERE IT PUT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO EQUATE THE SOVIET/CUBAN ROLE WITH THAT OF THE FRENCH. MILITARY INTERVENTION IS NOT A NORMAL OPTION IN FRENCH AFRICAN POLICY. IT IS A STEP  
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TAKEN VERY RELUCTANTLY AND WITH AN EYE TO DOMESTIC AND AFRICAN OPINION. WHEN IT HAS OCCURRED IT HAS BEEN NOT ONLY AT THE REQUEST OF THE COUNTRIES TO BE ASSISTED DIRECTLY BUT ALSO AT THE URGING OF FRANCE'S MODERATE AFRICAN FRIENDS WHO FEEL THEIR INDEPENDENCE THREATENED BY EXTERNAL--GENERALLY SOVIET/CUBAN--FORCES. DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTION IS UNDERTAKEN IN AS LIMITED A FASHION AS POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE. (SOME IN THE MILITARY HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THIS EMPHASIS ON LIMITING THE EXTENT OF DIRECT INVOLVEMENT HAS ENTAILED SOME FAIRLY HIGH MILITARY RISKS.) IN GENERAL FRENCH OBJECTIVES HAVE ALSO BEEN LIMITED: TO STABILIZE A SITUATION SUFFICIENTLY TO LEAVE ROOM FOR POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS. THE FRENCH DO NOT DELUDE THEMSELVES THAT THEY CAN RESOLVE A PROBLEM THROUGH MILITARY MEANS.

3. THE FRENCH ACCEPT THE GENERAL PREMISE THAT ANY OUTSIDE MILITARY INTERVENTION IN AFRICA IS UNDESIRABLE. PRESIDENT GISCARD'S CALL AT LAST YEAR'S FRANCO-AFRICAN SUMMIT FOR "AFRICA FOR THE AFRICANS" WAS MORE THAN

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
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MERE RHETORIC THOUGH SUBSEQUENT EVENTS HAVE GIVEN IT A  
SOMEWHAT HOLLOW RING. IT WAS BASED ON A HARD-HEADED  
PERCEPTION OF HOW FRENCH INTERESTS CAN BEST BE SERVED:  
CONFL ICT IS BAD IN THAT IT DIVERTS RESOURCES FROM THE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL BENEFIT FRANCE AND  
THE WEST; CONFLICT ALSO PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR  
SOVIET/CUBAN MEDDLING; IN THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICT THE  
SOVIET BLOC CANNOT COMPETE IN AFRICA WITH THE WEST  
BECAUSE AFRICAN NATIONS WANT AND NEED WESTERN TECH-  
NOLOGY AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND THE WESTERN MARKETS  
FOR THEIR NATURAL RESOURCES. THIS EMPHASIS ON STABIL-  
ITY HAS SOMETIMES BEEN INTERPRETED AS A POLICY OF  
SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATIVE AND OPPOSITION TO "PROGRES-  
SIVE" REGIMES. WHILE THAT MAY BE THE PREFERENCE, IT IS  
NOT THE POLICY. IN EXECUTION FRENCH POLICY IS CONSIS-  
TENT WITH THE STATED POSITION THAT THE FORM OF

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GOVERNANCE OF AFRICAN STATES IS NOT A LEGITIMATE CONCERN OF FRANCE OR OTHER OUTSIDE POWERS. (OF THE TWENTY-TWO AFRICAN STATES REPRESENTED AT THE RECENT FRANCO-AFRICAN SUMMIT IN PARIS THERE WERE QUITE A FEW "PROGRESSIVE" COUNTRIES; FRANCE HAS SUCCEEDED BETTER THAN MOST WESTERN STATES IN MAINTAINING FULL AND QUITE NORMAL RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA; FRANCE IS ONE OF THE FEW WESTERN COUNTRIES WITH REPRESENTATION IN LUANDA; PERSISTENT FRENCH DIPLOMACY WAS A MAJOR FACTOR IN GUINEA'S RECENT OPENING TO THE WEST, ETC.)

4. WHILE THE FRENCH AGREE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF NO FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN AFRICA, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE THEM THAT THE RUSSIANS, WITH THEIR CUBAN SURROGATES, COULD BE PERSUADED TO ADHERE TO IT. IT WOULD PROBABLY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO CONVINCE THE AFRICAN STATES THAT LOOK TO FRANCE (AND THE WEST) FOR SUPPORT AGAINST SOVIET-BACKED AGGRESSION. IN THIS REGARD IT IS WORTH RECALLING THAT FRENCH POLICIES ARE STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THE COUNSEL OF AFRICAN LEADERS, PARTICULARLY SENGHOR AND HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY BUT OTHERS ALSO. THE GOF IS CONSEQUENTLY SENSITIVE TO THEIR FEARS OF BEING ABANDONED BY THE WEST.

5. THE FRENCH ARE PARTLY THE ORIGINATORS AND CERTAINLY THE MAJOR NON-AFRICAN PROPONENTS OF A PAN-AFRICAN FORCE. THEY HAVE NOT BEEN VERY PRECISE IN FLESHING THE CONCEPT OUT IN PRACTICAL TERMS. PARTLY THIS STEMS FROM AWARENESS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES, INCLUDING THE NECESSITY OF SOME KIND OF OAU SANCTION AND THE NEAR IMPOSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING IT. BUT THEY CONTINUE TO NUDGE THE IDEA ALONG BECAUSE THEY FEEL THAT MERELY TALKING ABOUT SUCH A FORCE HAS AN  
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IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT IN BOOSTING THE SPIRITS OF THOSE WHO FEEL THREATENED AND AS A DETERRENT AGAINST AGGRESSION.

6. IN ADVOCATING A PAN-AFRICAN FORCE THE FRENCH ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE POSSIBLE UNDESIRABLE EFFECT OF POLARIZING THE CONTINENT INTO PRO-WEST AND PRO-EAST CAMPS. WE THINK THIS IS OVERSHADOWED IN THEIR THINKING, HOWEVER, BY THE CONSIDERATION THAT IN THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS THEY CAN FIND THEMSELVES CONFRONTED WITH THE CHOICE OF ABANDONING A FRIEND TO AN EXTERNAL THREAT OR INTERVENING DIRECTLY TO COUNTER IT. THEY SEE THE SECOND OPTION AS UNPALATABLE, DANGEROUS AND A SURE

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PRESCRIPTION FOR POLARIZATION. THAT IS WHY THE FRENCH ARE MAKING A MAJOR EFFORT IN TRAINING A NUMBER OF AFRICAN ARMIES AND ARE SPONSORING REGIONAL DEFENSE COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS (E.G. THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY) AND ARE ENCOURAGING OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES TO DO THE SAME. THE POLARIZATION WHICH PROBABLY DISTURBS THE FRENCH THE MOST AT PRESENT IS THAT BETWEEN ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN STATES. THE FRENCH WANT BRITISH AND US COOPERATION AND DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT IN EXPLAINING THAT WESTERN (INCLUDING FRENCH) ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA ARE NOT A THREAT TO THE CONTINENT.

7. CONCERNING THE REF A PROPOSAL THAT AN AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION BE CHARGED WITH EXAMINING THE QUESTION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES, WE THINK THE FRENCH  
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WOULD FIND THE IDEA INTERESTING. THEY DO NOT HIDE THEIR BAD CONSCIENCE FOR RESPONSIBILITY IN DRAWING SOME OF THE MORE IRRATIONAL BORDERS DEFINING COUNTRIES AND DIVIDING PEOPLES IN AFRICA. AT THE SAME TIME THEIR CONVICTION THAT AFRICA CAN DEVELOP ONLY THROUGH AVOIDING CONFLICT HAS MADE THEM MORE AFRICAN THAN THE AFRICANS IN SUPPORT OF THE OAU RESOLUTION ON THE INVIOABILITY OF INHERITED COLONIAL FRONTIERS. THEY FEAR THAT ANY BREACH IN THE PRINCIPLE WOULD OPEN A PANDORA'S BOX OF STRIFE. IF ASKED, THEREFORE, WE THINK THE FRENCH WOULD ADVOCATE APPROACHING THE QUESTION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN A VERY GINGERLY FASHION.

8. IN SUM, WE THINK THERE IS A BROAD COINCIDENCE OF VIEWS AND OBJECTIVES BETWEEN US AND THE FRENCH. WE THINK RECENT FRENCH POLICIES HAVE BEEN GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF WESTERN INTERESTS ON THE CONTINENT. THROUGH CONTINUED CLOSE CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION WE CAN FURTHER OUR COMMON GOAL OF HELPING THE AFRICANS SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS. WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO LET DIFFERENCES IN TACTICAL APPROACH INTERFERE WITH THIS COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP.  
HARTMAN

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## Message Attributes

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